

Minutes for the 1/10/08 Meeting of the Newington Human Rights Commission:

Present: Jeffrey Cultrera Monica Golec Michael Munroe Phyllis DiCara
Christine Andrews Val Ginn Tim Manke Ann Cameron
Ken Freidenberg - Director Newington Department of Human Services

Absent: Scott McBride

The meeting commenced at 7:00 pm.

The following Officers were elected by the commission:

Jeffrey Cultrera - Chairperson
Monica Golec - Vice Chairperson
Michael Munroe - Secretary

Ken Freidenberg distributed the Newington Town Department of Human Services Monthly report for December 2007. Ken also reviewed the Town Ordinance that outlines the purpose and the responsibilities of the Human Rights Commission.

There was discussion about what the mission of the Human Rights Commission should be. It was agreed that there was a lot of diversity in the town of Newington that people might not be aware of. Diversity awareness was something that the Commission agreed could be helpful for the community.

Members expressed that in the past that part of the budget of the Commission could be used in conjunction with other programs that were already established in the town. Tim Manke described the Six Feet of Influence program that the Department of Human Services Youth-Adult Council is implementing as an example. The Commission also agreed that the budget could be used to hire an outside source that could present a relevant cultural program. Ken Freidenberg stated that he could obtain a list of different cultural programs that might be of interest to the Commission.

Ken Freidenberg explained that the budget for Commission was 1500 dollars. He explained that these funds needed to be used on a project that took place before the end of the fiscal year on 6/30/08. Any unused funds would return to the Town General Budget.

The Commission discussed and agreed that it would be best to start out with small projects and work towards larger projects due to the fact that 6 of the 9 Commission members are new.

Tim Manke made the suggestion that the Commission take part in already planned town wide activities as a way of reaching the greatest number of Newington residents. Such events include the Memorial Day parade in May, the Town-wide Extravaganza in July, and the Waterfall Festival in September. Ken Freidenberg stated that the town was planning a Volunteer Expo in the fall and the Commission might want to take part in this as another way of exposure. The Commission agreed with Tim and Ken that these were good ideas.

It was proposed by Tim Manke that the Commission could have a presence in the Memorial Day Parade. The Commission then came to an agreement that includes having people marching in the parade carrying flags that represent their ethnic heritage. This could be a means of demonstrating to the citizens of Newington the extent of the diversity that exists in town. It was also agreed that a Human Rights Commission banner could lead the marchers in the parade. This banner then could also be used for other events that the Commission was involved in.

Christine Andrews volunteered to investigate about the type of flags to be used in the parade and how they will be constructed.

Val Ginn volunteered to contact the various ethnic clubs in town to see if they would be interested in marching in the parade. It was agreed that churches and schools should be contacted to gauge their interest also.

It was agreed that organizations interested in marching in the parade would contact Jeff Cultrera.

Monica Golec agreed to write a press release for the local newspapers outlining how the community can become involved in the Memorial Day parade.

It was agreed that the logo of the Human Services Department would be used on the Human Rights Commission banner. Val Ginn stated that she would inquire about the cost of the banner. She estimated that it would cost about 250 dollars. Ken Freidenberg stated that he would email Val a copy of the logo to use as artwork.

Tim Manke proposed that the Human Rights Commission be involved in the town wide sign program as a way of informing the public about the existence of the Newington Human Rights Commission. The Commission agreed that this was a good idea. Ken Freidenberg stated that he would find out about available dates and locations for the sign and email them to members.

An event at the Waterfall Celebration has discussed by the Commission. It was agreed that the Commission banner could be used at this event. Preliminary discussions involved a hands-on interactive event for children and families. Money from the 2008 - 09 budget would be used for this.

A possible food drive and/or toiletry drive to benefit the Human Services Department were discussed as possible future projects for the Commission to undertake.

Ken Freidenberg agreed to email to each member a list of other members email addresses.

Michael Munroe said that he would email the minutes of this meeting to Ken Freidenberg.

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Commission would take place on 2/7/08 at 7:00pm. Ken Freidenberg agreed to set up the meeting room and email members about this.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:40pm

Michael Munroe - Secretary